

The truth is that last week's job report is a ringing endorsement for the American Jobs Plan and the American Families Plan of President Biden.

Thanks to the American Rescue Plan, more than 220 million shots have been administered, and more than 100 million Americans have been fully vaccinated, allowing businesses all across America to start to reopen. We need to build on the success of the American Rescue Plan, not dismantle it piece by piece. We need to work together to invest in workers and families for the 21st century, not grind Congress to a halt, as some might prefer.

The American Jobs Plan will enable American workers and businesses to build on those successes. It will help reduce barriers for entry to many workers. It will direct billions of dollars toward helping dislocated workers develop new skills and secure a stable, well-paying job, building wind turbines or electric vehicles or making other American-made goods that will be in high demand in the years to come.

Another priority for Democrats is throwing a lifeline to working parents. Fortunately, we have made some progress on that front with the child tax credit expansion and other provisions in the American Rescue Plan. Those policies put more money in the pockets of middle-class and low-income working families in the midst of the worst economic recession we have seen in decades.

When President Trump left office, 30 million Americans couldn't afford to put food on the table. Think about that. Just 1 month after the American Rescue Plan, that number was reduced to 17 million, and we should never accept that or any number as acceptable in the future. We have cut the number of Americans going hungry by nearly half since President Biden took office, but we still have work to do.

We need to provide more relief to parents so they can work a full-time job, if they choose, without having to worry about finding a safe, reliable place for the kids. We have to ensure that low- and middle-income families pay no more than 7 percent, that is what President Biden is asking, no more than 7 percent income on high-quality childcare. And that is on top of billions of dollars in funding the American Jobs Plan would invest in building and retrofitting childcare facilities across our State and Nation.

Last week's job report is a wake-up call. We can't just wish this crisis away. We have to act and act together. We can't reopen our economy fully until the virus is under control, and then we can't wait for 10 years to get back on track to where we were a year and a half ago.

We can't build a prosperous economy for the future unless we address some of the systemic shortcomings that prevent too many workers from participating fully. Even if next month's job report exceeds expectations, such as the one in March, we need to rebuild

our economy and put working families at the center of it, and make bold investments in the future right now.

We can keep good jobs in America and build industries that have a future if we are ready to invest in American families.

I hope our Republican colleagues will not say: Let's go slow; let's be satisfied with second. You know, maybe we just can't compete with some other countries in the world.

I don't buy it. If we believe in America and its workers, we need to invest in them and their future. It is time to think bigger. It is time to believe that this country has a future which is going to be bright if we come together and do our job to stand by working families and the men and women—and, in this moment, particularly the women—who need that helping hand.

I yield the floor.

The PRESIDING OFFICER (Ms. DUCKWORTH). The Senator from Alabama.

#### BIDEN ADMINISTRATION

Mr. TUBERVILLE. Madam President, President Biden promised unity to bring the country together during his inaugural address. I was there with my 26-year-old son Tucker. We listened together and hoped that President Biden would live up to his words. I assumed that when he said he would be a President for all Americans, it also included the 75 million Americans who voted for Donald Trump.

I was ready, and I still am, to work with President Biden in good faith to find commonsense solutions to problems facing the country and to ensure the voices of Alabamians are heard. But, so far, the President has neither united nor reached across the aisle. His actions have shown that he is fine to play along with the divisive tactics of the progressive left, rather than unite a large and diverse country.

President Biden is acting like he is the President of New York and California, not the United States of America. The progressives can barely contain their excitement. The President received glowing reviews from leading progressive Members of Congress, saying the President has "exceeded expectations."

The left have been waiting a long time for an administration to implement their vision. They need to use a Trojan horse to put that vision into practice because it is remarkably unpopular with a majority of the American people.

Their vision is unpopular because it centers around a core belief of imposing their vision on everyone. But to achieve this, that means taking away your freedom—freedom to think differently, freedom to worship differently, freedom for you and your family to live differently, freedom to spend your hard-earned money the way you want to spend it.

Taking away those freedoms—freedoms that are the foundation of America—is not progress. It is called socialism.

When progressives talk about equity, they mean equal outcomes, not opportunities. They want a government that is so powerful it owns everything and chooses how wealth is distributed to ensure equal outcomes. That, in essence, is socialism, and the folks promoting this vision are channeling the same energy as the Marxists and communists of the 20th century.

Well, so far, President Biden has been a more willing partner to champion the progressive vision and export it from New York and California to every corner of the entire country. Just look at what has happened lately. One of President Biden's first moves was to signal to the world that America's borders are open. The result? Absolute chaos. And the administration shows little interest in fixing it. We cannot have a country without borders. That is common sense.

Democrats were so eager to undo all the work President Trump did at the border just because President Trump did it, not because there was merit in rolling back these policies. Because of this insane, open-door policy, the American taxpayer—not the Biden administration but the American taxpayer—is footing a \$60 million bill a week—\$60 million a week—to cover the cost of housing unaccompanied minors at the border—60 million.

In the same rush, Democrats are working to undermine the integrity of the election process through H.R. 1 and S. 1, the Federal Government takeover of our elections.

They are working to force millions of workers to join unions. They all want to strip States of their right-to-work laws, called the PRO Act.

Democrats are using things Americans desperately need, like traditional infrastructure, as a smokescreen for things Americans desperately don't want, like the fantasy Green New Deal.

And now Democrats in both Chambers have introduced legislation to expand the Supreme Court. And because they don't have the votes to ram this through the Senate—such an extreme agenda—many Democrats want to eliminate the filibuster, despite the fact that many wrote a letter asking to keep the filibuster just a few years ago, when they were in the minority.

The bottom line is that the Democrats want to change the rules so they can get their way, because they are to the point where they want to transform our country, so said some of our leaders.

As concerning as each of these actions have been, even more alarming are the progressives' efforts to indoctrinate our children by favoring fringe theories over actual learning. For example, the California Department of Education is considering using a curriculum that says: "The concept of mathematics being purely objective is unequivocally false." Their goal is to "dismantle racism in mathematics."

Apparently, two plus two does not equal four anymore because it is not

politically correct. And just last year, the United States ranked 37th in the world in math—what a disaster.

But here is the worst of all. The U.S. Department of Education recently introduced a rule that would direct millions—millions—of taxpayer dollars to schools that promised teaching critical race theory and the 1619 Project for American history and civics.

Put aside for a minute that these theories have been routinely debunked by historians and actively seek to divide Americans on strict racial lines. Critical race theory's central belief is that the law and legal institutions of the United States are inherently racist—so racist, they believe, that these institutions cannot be redeemed and must be completely replaced. The goal should be to have better laws and better application of those laws, not to tear them down.

For pushing this, it is not about uniting our country, it is about fanning the flames of the unfortunate human tendency to divide and separate into different tribes instead of uniting us around a set of common morals.

Shouldn't we be fighting that impulse to divide into groups against each other? I think we need to do more uniting, and that should start in our schools, which is why I cannot believe that the U.S. Government is spending taxpayer dollars to teach our kids to dislike our country. How low have we sunk? These ideas are designed to drive a wedge between Americans based solely on their skin color. They openly reject the goal of the United States of liberty and justice for all.

Our schools should be places that encourage the open debate of ideas and teach important morals to our young people so that they know right from wrong. That is why I joined Leader McCONNELL and 38 of my Republican colleagues to send a letter to Education Secretary Cordona, urging him to withdraw these divisive grant programs. Part of our letter reads:

Families did not ask for this divisive nonsense. Voters did not vote for it. Americans never decided our children should be taught that our country is inherently evil.

Secretary Cordona should redirect these grant dollars to American history programs that teach the ideals and morals that have made the United States the greatest force for good in human history.

I spent my career in education—40 years. I have seen firsthand how a quality education can put a kid on the path to success in our great country, regardless of their race, religion, or economic background. When done right, education is the key to freedom. But the education we see in many schools today is just cementing existing inequality rather than giving kids the chance to escape it.

We have got a clear trend here: undermine border security, undermine the election system, undermine the Supreme Court, undermine the Senate, undermine our education system, un-

dermine our country. If your goal is to deconstruct and completely reshape a country, these are the steps that you would take.

Our country is not perfect. There is a lot we have got to work on. But here in the United States of America, citizens have freedom and opportunities, and that is what we need to be focused on, not giving handouts, not dismantling our institutions but creating opportunity.

We have the ability to make it better. We have the rules to do so. Those rules are in place so that all of us can respect, if not always agree with, the changes that are made to make this country better. That is called democracy. But changing the rules to force one's vision on everyone isn't democracy; it is tyranny. My Republican colleagues and I will continue to stand against that. That is what America was founded on, after all, and it is what America needs now.

I yield the floor.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Senator from Oregon.

NOMINATION OF ANDREA JOAN PALM

Mr. WYDEN. Madam President and colleagues, very shortly, the Senate will vote on whether or not to advance the nomination of Andrea Palm to serve as the Deputy Secretary of the Department of Health and Human Services. I strongly urge the Senate to support this nominee because Ms. Palm knows every nook and cranny at the Department. I will tell my colleagues, there is experience, and then there is Andrea Palm's experience.

During the Obama administration, Ms. Palm served in multiple senior roles at the Department of Health and Human Services, including serving as the Department's Chief of Staff.

She also served in the White House as a senior adviser on the Domestic Policy Council. Very importantly, she has played a particularly strong role in looking at policies to tackle the pandemic. She served recently as the head of the Wisconsin Department of Health Services. That put her on the frontlines against COVID-19. There she was a coalition builder. She brought together the State government, the healthcare sector, public health experts, and more to protect the people of Wisconsin and save lives.

She led a collaborative effort to build the State's testing and contact tracing program. And thanks to her hard work, Wisconsin, on a number of particulars, has moved ahead in the country on vaccinations.

Ms. Palm started her career in social work, helping vulnerable kids and their families during times of crisis. During her Finance Committee hearing, she talked about how that experience set her on a path toward public service and how it is going to help her when she returns to the Department of Health and Human Services.

She also mentioned a story that I thought was particularly relevant in these days of polarized government.

She mentioned that former Secretary Burwell put her in charge of what was called the common ground agenda. Secretary Burwell knew that Ms. Palm brought people together, Democrats and Republicans, to tackle big challenges.

She said—and I note that there is a senior member of the Finance Committee here, our colleague from Texas. She said to our committee that the common ground agenda is the perspective she is going to bring to the Department. You can sure sign me up to that proposition because there is a lot that needs to be done, as my colleagues know, when it comes to big healthcare challenges.

I mentioned Ms. Palm is going to have to hit the ground running when it comes to the pandemic response as one issue. And my colleague from Texas knows, we are in the middle of a transformation of Medicare.

Back when I was director of the senior citizens—the Gray Panthers, Medicare was an acute care program. If you broke your ankle, Medicare was there for you. If you had a horrible case of flu, Medicare was there for you. Madam President and colleagues, that is not Medicare today.

Today's Medicare is chronic disease, cancer, diabetes, heart disease, and strokes. Millions of seniors have two or more of these conditions. In 2017, the Finance Committee, on a bipartisan basis, led the passage of the Chronic Care Act, dealing with modernizing Medicare, and we are very much looking forward to working again on a bipartisan basis with Ms. Palm and Secretary Becerra because there is a lot to do here, particularly as it relates to traditional Medicare.

My colleague and I know together, because we have worked on these issues, that Medicare Advantage has really moved forward on many of these particulars, and we have got a lot to do on traditional Medicare. Ms. Palm is going to be instrumental in that effort.

We also know, on another issue the Finance Committee is dealing with—that millions of Americans feel that they are getting mugged when they walk up to the prescription drug counter at their pharmacy. It is long past time for the Congress to step up and act to bring down the cost of people's medicine. The Senate Finance Committee has worked in a bipartisan way on that. There are other approaches that I support, particularly giving Medicare the authority to negotiate and hold down prices. But we can work together in a bipartisan way on prescription drugs.

Finally, there is an enormous agenda ahead of us in terms of major issues surrounding mental health care. I was given a report by the GAO just a few days ago that really highlights how we have seen so many people falling between the cracks in the mental healthcare system as a result of the pandemic; you know, rural seniors, for example, young people who perhaps are